



VERNHAM DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

Chairman: Cllr John Hale

Clerk: Mrs Miriam Edwards

Tel: 07768 453772 ; email: clerk@vernhamdean-pc.gov.uk

Website: www.vernhamdean-pc.gov.uk

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Monday 12th May 2025 at 7.30pm, held at the Millennium Hall, Vernham Dean.

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Councillors present:

Cllr John Hale (Chairman)

Cllr Glynn Seymour

Cllr Julie Drury (Vice Chairman)

Cllr Haydn Watkins

Cllr David Christy

Cllr Glenn Tollett

Cllr Nigel Palmer

Clerk

1. TO ELECT A CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

- 1.1 Councillor Hale asked councillors for nominations for the office of Chairman of the Parish Council. Councillor John Hale was proposed by Cllr Tollett, seconded by Cllr Watkins, and elected unanimously to the office of Chairman.

2. TO ELECT A VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

- 2.1 Councillor John Hale asked councillors for nominations for the office of Vice Chairman of the Parish Council. Councillor Julie Drury was proposed by Cllr Watkins, seconded by Cllr Palmer, and elected unanimously to the office of Vice-Chairman.

3. TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE

- 3.1 Declarations of acceptance of office were duly signed by the Chairman and Vice Chairman and returned to clerk for counter signature and filing.

4. TO AGREE COUNCILLORS' RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2025/26

- 4.1 Councillors agreed the following portfolios:
- Councillor John Hale – Playing Fields Association
 - Cllr Julie Drury – planning
 - Cllr Adrian Butt – Village Hall liaison
 - Cllr Haydn Watkins – footpaths
 - Cllr David Christy – environmental issues
 - Cllr Nigel Palmer – Upton/highways & transport
 - Cllr Glynn Seymour – planning / website maintenance
 - Cllr Glenn Tollett – Playing Fields Association

5. TO COMPLETE THE ANNUAL UPDATE OF REGISTER OF INTERESTS

- 5.1 Councillors declared any updates to their annual registration of interests.

6. TO AGREE A CHAIRMAN'S ALLOWANCE

- 6.1 The Chairman's allowance, for urgent or emergency payments in between meetings such as condolences, was discussed.

RESOLVED: Councillors discussed and agreed to have a reserve in the accounts of

Vernham Dean Parish Council Minutes - May 2025 to April 2026

Copies of Parish Council Minutes may be accessed at www.vernhamdean-pc.gov.uk

Signed Date



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£100 for any unforeseen circumstances.

7. TO INSPECT ANY DEEDS AND TRUST INVESTMENTS IN THE CUSTODY OF THE COUNCIL

- 7.1 There were no deeds which required review.
There were no trust investments held by the Parish Council.

The Burydene – registered with the Land Registry
Village pond - registered with the Land Registry
Rockmoor Pond - registered with the County Council with ‘village green’ status.

8. TO DETERMINE THE TIME AND PLACE OF ORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL UP TO AND INCLUDING THE NEXT ANNUAL MEETING

- 8.1 Councillors agreed the list of dates for future meetings provided by the Clerk, and to hold them at the Millennium Hall:

14 th July 2025	12 th January 2026
8 th September 2025	9 th March 2026
10 th November 2025	11 th May 2026 – APCM

Action: Clerk to send out some possible dates for the Annual Assembly, in April 2026.

Reviews of standing orders & financial regulations, policies & procedures, assets & land, and insurance cover were carried out at other meetings during the municipal year. Consideration of subscriptions falling to be paid annually was made during budget setting.

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 9.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Adrian Butt who was likely to require an extended absence from attending Parish Council meetings. Councillors to discuss this further at the July meeting as Cllr Butt indicated he wished to remain as a councillor.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 10.1 There were no declarations of interests relating to items on the agenda, or requests for dispensations, in accordance with the Council’s code of conduct.
Cllr Palmer updated that a planning application was for a tree at his home address, and therefore he would abstain from any resolutions on the matter.

11. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 11.1 Councillors agreed and approved the minutes of the last meeting which was held on 10th March 2025, and which were signed by the Chairman.

12. ACTIONS ARISING

- 12.1 Horns Hill footpath – Ranger and Clerk had arranged a meeting in June to cover a number of footpath issues.
12.2 Footpath from Hen Barn Corner, Upton to Upton Manor – the whole path was proving impassible especially as the summer growth continued. It would require a brush cutter rather than a strimmer. **Action:** Clerk to identify someone to tackle this.



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- 12.3 'S'bends at Henley turning – Cllr Hale had written to County Councillor Kirsty North. The owner of the adjacent field was willing to allow drainage onto their land, and HCC had been asked how this could be progressed.
- 12.4 Sticking gate on Conholt land (Thornycombe wood) – this had been dealt with and could easily be opened. Japanese Knotweed had been identified in the woods the previous year which had been reported but clearly no action had been taken.
Action: Cllr Hale would pursue.
- 12.5 Flowers Farm, Vernham Street – no action had been taken by the owners to cover the thatch despite the planning authority updating that they had made contact with them. **Action:** Cllr Drury would provide photographs to the clerk to forward them to Test Valley, requesting action.

13. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- 13.1 One member of the public attended the meeting. They expressed their appreciation for the work carried out by the parish council.
- 13.2 The resident commented on the scale of the renovation at Conholt Estate and that there were many positives. However, the dark skies in the village were being compromised by lighting on the estate which may be security lighting during renovations. Cllr Hale advised explained that the estate itself is in the county of Wiltshire and that the local Parish Council in Chute had already raised the issue with Wiltshire Council.
- 13.3 The resident mentioned that the village design statement discouraged external lighting in the village, but there appeared to be an increase in motion detector lights which he felt were unattractive. A discussion was had but it was generally felt that security lighting was deemed a necessary evil because of the increase of rural crime.
- 13.4 A letter had been received from a resident who was unable to attend the meeting. Their complaint was the perceived inaction of Hampshire County Council to solve the overflow of the village pond which caused flooding, and that drainage was not maintained.

Cllr Hale explained the HCC engineers inspected the village the previous year and one of the decisions was not to interfere with the pond or make it deeper. When rainwater flowed down Bulpits hill, if the groundwater was already high, there was nowhere for the rainwater to go, irrespective of the depth of the pond.

Cllr Hale advised that he would respond in writing, explaining that work could only be undertaken if the engineers recommended it.

The second complaint in the letter was that the houses particularly built for older people in the Parish had not been replaced (with specific reference to the bungalows on Bulpits Hill). Two of the bungalows had subsequently been sold on owing to Aster being unable to fill them, and were privately owned.

Councillors discussed the matter, which had arisen on occasions in the past. There was no obligation to replace what had been effectively lost, and certainly that obligation did not fall to the Parish Council. Aster was under an obligation for any money received to be spent on social housing anywhere within their operating area. Aster was responsible for all social housing which had been a political decision to remove it from local councils.

It was not felt that there was a clear need for retirement housing in the village, particularly with no infrastructure. There was no longer a regular bus service, with



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only a 'dial-a-ride' type service on which senior citizen bus passes could not be used, and the shop/post office had closed around 2008.

Cllr Christy mentioned that this raised issues about the need for housing for local younger people who could not afford to buy in the village.

Cllr Drury raised the point that requests had been made by the Borough Council for land sites suitable for affordable housing, but there had been no interest from landowners to sell for this purpose.

Cllr Watkins pointed out that the resident had questioned the validity of the legislation surrounding the selling of social housing to housing associations and to private individuals, which was not a matter the Parish Council could answer.

14. PLANNING - to discuss any planning matters and recent applications to TVBC

14.1 16 The Dell, Vernham Dean - [25/00861/FULLN | Front and rear single storey extensions | 16 The Dell Vernham Dean](#)

Cllr Drury updated that the application was not controversial, and in keeping with the street scene. There were no negative comments by neighbours. No comment.

14.2 Swift Cottage, Upton - [25/00992/TREEN | G1 \(Ash trees\) - Remove 2 Ash trees in front of property to 5ft standing posts | Swift Cottage Upton](#)

The trees were victim to Ash die-back and there was a lot of weight, with them leaning towards at least two neighbouring properties. There was concern that in high winds they could come down. There were no plans by the occupier to replant. No comment.

15. COUNCILLORS' UPDATES

15.1 Cllr Seymour mentioned the TVBC mowing schedule for HCC land, and in particular Haydown Leas where the corner was awash with wildflowers. **Action:** clerk to ask TVBC not to mow until updated. Cllr Seymour would advise when the flowers had gone over.

15.2 Cllr Watkins raised FP2 (Vernham Street by Fowlers Farm) and the replacement of three stiles with gates. The clerk was due to meet with the HCC ranger in June and would walk this path to assess. There was no more funding available from HCC so materials would need to be financed by the landowner or the Parish Council with volunteers undertaking installation.

15.3 Cllr Watkins raised the issue with the new 'dial a ride' type bus replacement scheme which would not accept bus passes. He felt this might affect the success of the project.

15.4 Cllr Drury reported that the stile at the north end of Vernham St just before the turning to Littledown (FP6) had been replaced with a gate.

Cllr Drury felt that pressure should be put onto the owners of the new build at Puckeridge, Bulpits Hill, for replacement stiles both ends of FP3 as the house and landscaping was complete. **Action:** clerk to add to list for June meeting with Ranger.

15.5 Cllr Palmer reported that the flooding and defective road edges at Hen Barn bend, Upton had been reported to HCC online.

Cllr Palmer mentioned that Upton was organising its summer event at Parsonage Farm field, to be held on 27th June to bring the village together.

RESOLVED: Councillors agreed to give £50 towards the event to support the Upton Working Group's efforts to get the village working together.



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- 15.6 Cllr Christy highlighted issues with the stile at the end of the horse paddock in Vernham Street (FP5) which was very slippery in wet weather and a big drop down into the adjacent field. This made it very difficult with a big dog! A kissing gate would be useful there. **Action:** clerk to contact owner.
He also mentioned that a gate had been installed at Box Farm onto the road, and the stiles opposite had also been replaced with metal gates.
- 15.7 Cllr Christy updated that there had been no further reports about the dangerous driver on the route to Fosbury which had first been reported by several residents in April. Cllr Seymour reported that on his own commute most days he saw the driver who was driving much more calmly. This may have been because of the furore on social media and the possibility of police involvement.
- 15.8 Cllr Christy reported that he had seen several potholes recently repaired to what seemed a good standard, but others close-by were randomly left unchecked. **Action:** clerk to arrange for Cllr North to do her best to attend the July meeting to discuss this in more detail.
- 15.9 Cllr Tollett asked if there was anything which could be done to improve the facilities at the pavilion and make it more comfortable and inviting to users. Cllr Hale asked for ideas from everyone in the community, and whether anyone was keen to help with some improvements.
- 15.10 Cllr Hale advised that two football teams had requested to use the football pitches during the season – one every Sunday in August and a new team playing in the winter. The goal nets were in good condition but new corner flags would be needed. The white line machine had been cleaned by a painter and decorator who had been using the equipment, so it was also in good condition for the coming season.

16. CLERK'S REPORT & CORRESPONDENCE

- 16.1 The clerk asked Councillors to confirm of acceptance of the mowing contract with Scofell for 2025/26. £3345 + VAT. This was some considerable increase from the previous year, but another quote had been requested from a local trusted contractor who had admitted they could not match it. The weather always influenced the speed of the grass growing – too dry and it did not need the higher number of cuts, and too wet, and an inappropriate schedule meant the grass got too long and the cut grass clumped. There was little that could be done to control this, so it was agreed to retain the higher number of cuts rather than pay for additional cuts which would prove more costly in the long run.
RESOLVED: All agreed to proceed with the contract for the financial year.
Regarding the drainage mound on Bury Dene. A small lump sum had been given to the Parish Council by the County Council as the mound helped to protect the school. This was by way of a wayleave, to cover maintenance, as the agreement made at the time was that the Parish Council would take responsibility for cutting it. However, the Parish Council was also not allowed to do anything else with it (such as planting) other than cut it. The money had long been used up so cutting of the mound had to be budgeted for by the Parish Council and was not in the quote from Scofell. **Action:** Cllr Hale to address support of the ongoing costs with the County Council.
- 16.2 The clerk asked for a decision regarding the purchase of new picnic tables for Bury Dene. The wooden ones were beyond repair and becoming dangerous. Cllrs agreed to purchase four benches (two brown and 2 green) from Solway Recycling at a cost



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of £595 + VAT each.

Cllr Hale mentioned that the tennis net would need replacing in due course.

- 16.3 The clerk asked for agreement to transfer £30,000 from Lloyds to the new Redwoods Bank savings account. Councillors agreed this was a reasonable amount from earmarked reserves.

17. ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2024/25

The following items were resolved:

- 17.1 Approval of the Annual Governance Statement in Section 1 of the AGAR and actions put forward by the internal auditor
- 17.2 Approval of the Clerk and Chairman signing Section 1 of the AGAR
- 17.3 Agreement that the Statement of Accounts contained in Section 2 of the AGAR represented fairly the financial position of the Council
- 17.4 Approval of the Council's accounts, and agreement that the Responsible Financial Officer and the Chairman to sign Section 2 of the AGAR
- 17.5 Acceptance of the Annual Internal Audit Report together with any comments or recommendations arising from the internal audit
- 17.6 Agreement of the dates for the publication of the notice of public rights from 9th June 2025 to 18th July 2025.
- 17.7 Confirmation that there were no conflicts of interest with the external auditors, BDO LLP.

18. PERFORMANCE MONITORING 2024/25

- 18.1 The internal audit of the 2024/25 financial accounts was completed on 2nd May. Councillors reviewed the effectiveness of the audit and agreed to adopt the recommendations made by the auditor.
- 18.2 Councillor John Hale agreed to continue to act as the internal controller for the Parish Council in 2025/26.
- 18.3 Councillors agreed to appoint Do The Numbers Ltd as the internal auditor for the financial year 2025/26.

19. FINANCE

- 19.1 On the day of the meeting, the bank balance stood at £56,378.26 with reserves of £46,364.
- 19.2 The clerk had circulated the payments made since the last meeting. Cllr Hale agreed them as an accurate record.

TYPE	DATE	PAYEE	AMOUNT	REMARKS
BACS	13/3/25	TVBC	283.98	Dog bin emptying
BACS	17/3/25	Parish Online	324.00	Website hosting
BACS	17/3/25	HBT Parish Council	310.69	Part share Upton defib electricity



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BACS	20/3/25	Redwoods Bank	1.00	Transfer to open new savings account
BACS	9/4/25	HMRC	62.20	PAYE April
BACS	9/4/25	Mrs M Edwards	248.93	Clerk's Salary April
BACS	15/4/25	Mrs K Lowth	30.00	Pavilion Cleaning
BACS	22/4/25	Mrs K Lowth	30.00	Pavilion Cleaning
BACS	22/4/25	SSE	138.74	Pavilion Electricity
BACS	22/4/25	Tangley Parish Council	153.99	Part Share SLR maintenance
BACS	22/4/25	Hampshire ALC	327.00	HALC & NALC subscription fees
BACS	22/4/25	Geoxphere	43.20	GIS mapping software
BACS	22/4/25	Red 76 Tax	144.00	Annual payroll charge 2024.25
DD	23/4/25	ICO	47.00	Data Protection fee
BACS	28/4/25	Roland Security	90.00	Locksmiths – container lock repair
BACS	12/5/25	Essential Fire Ltd	42.00	Fire extinguisher servicing
BACS	12/5/25	Mr J Hale	139.00	Purchase of hoover for pavilion
BACS	12/5/25	Business Stream	9.70	Pavilion water rates
BACS	12/5/25	Do The Numbers Ltd	275.00	Internal Audit fee

21. NEXT MEETING

21.1 The next ordinary meeting of the Parish Council was due to be held on Monday 14th July 2025.

The meeting concluded at 20.40

Signed Chairman



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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

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	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	28,462	51,469	<i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	10,000	14,000	<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
3. (+) Total other receipts	113,771	8,372	<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
4. (-) Staff costs	3,947	3,734	<i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i>
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
6. (-) All other payments	96,817	22,294	<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
7. (=) Balances carried forward	51,469	47,813	<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	51,469	47,813	<i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.</i>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	310,116	311,714	<i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>
10. Total borrowings	0	0	<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i>
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.</i>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

mjedwards

Date 01/05/2025

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

12/05/2025

as recorded in minute reference:

MIN 17.3 REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

[Signature]

SIGNATURE REQUIRED



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Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

VERNHAM DEAN PARISH COUNCIL

www.vernhamdean-pc.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2024/25 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NOT USED
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered")	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

2/5/25

ELIZABETH S. GREEN (CPA)

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

Date

2/5/25

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).